

# 虎頭蛇尾

*hu3 tou2 she2 wei3*

There will be no film gallery, observation decks or 2,000 square feet of new space for food and beverage outlets on the 440-meter Avenue of the Stars. Nor will the bronze figure of Bruce Lee be extended.

There will just be a simple makeover for the promenade - some more plants, some more chairs, and a new toilet block too; a new coat of paint for the railings, and maybe some new floor tiles.

In other words, the grand plan to revitalize the Tsim Sha Tsui waterfront is no more, said the government. And to those who were excited about the original plan, the project certainly appears to be a case of “虎頭蛇尾” (*hu3 tou2 she2 wei3*).

“虎” (*hu3*) is a “tiger,” “頭” (*tou2*) “the head,” “蛇” (*she2*) “a snake,” and “尾” (*wei3*) “the tail.” Literally, “虎頭蛇尾” (*hu3 tou2 she2 wei3*) “tiger head, snake tail.” The idiom means “fine start and poor finish,” “bright beginning and dull

## Idiom by Lon Yan

finish,” “to start off with a bang but end up with a whimper,” “to begin with a flourish but peter out towards the end.”

It also means “a brave beginning and weak ending” and “things which start off big and then end up in nothing.” This idiom is used to describe people who do not finish what they start.

But in this case, while the “tiger head” has tapered off to a “snake tail,” it is not because the proposers have chickened out, but because of the real possibility that a judicial review might overturn the Town Planning Board’s approval for the major works.

### Terms containing the character “蛇” (*she2*) include:

蛇皮 (*she2 pi2*) - snake skin

蛇膽 (*she2 dan3*) - snake gall

蛇羹 (*she2 geng1*) - snake soup

蛇蝎美人 (*she2 xie1 mei3 ren2*) - a pretty woman with an evil heart